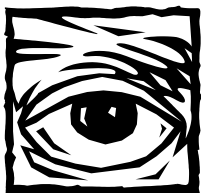




Choosing a Contractor



“Be sure the contractor is licensed with your local county authorities. Verify there are no previous complaints against the contractor.”

If your home repairs require work done by a contractor, take care to find a reliable company or individual. Ask people you know to refer you to a contractor, or call the local office of codes enforcement, builders association, Chamber of Commerce or Better Business Bureau.

Find a contractor familiar with the type of work you need and ask him if you can see some of his past work. If this is not possible, ask for references from previous jobs he/she has done.

Be sure the contractor is licensed with your local county authorities. Verify there are no previous complaints against him.

The contractor needs to be insured. He should carry comprehensive policies to protect his business and your home, including public liability, property damage protection, workers' compensation and coverage of damage which might become evident in the year after completion.

Ask for written quotes with all details from three different bidders. Remember, the lowest price is not always the best one. There may be a misunderstanding of the nature of the work being quoted, a mistake in the quote, or use of poor quality workmanship and materials. The details and agreements of the job must be written down.

- Include the building plans and/or specifications in the contract.
- Specify the start and finish dates in the contract to protect your interests, but realize that bad weather, unavailable materials or other problems may affect these dates.
- Include pay schedules and itemized prices for the work.
- Have a lawyer review all contracts and related documents before you sign, if possible.
- Don't make a large first payment, and don't pay for the project in full until work has been completed and after an approved final inspection.
- Clearly state any warranties or guarantees on the work.
- Be sure both you and the contractor sign the agreement, with each of you keeping original copies.

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